



Congressman Mike Simpson



Senior Newsletter

Volume 2, 2007

Simpson Co-Sponsors Drug Re-Importation Legislation

Congressman Mike Simpson is an original cosponsor of HR 380, the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act of 2007. This legislation allows U.S.-licensed pharmacies and drug wholesalers to import FDA-approved medications from Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan and pass along the savings to their American customers.

"Pharmaceuticals are an important part of modern medicine, and seniors should not have to worry about whether they can afford the medicines they need to stay healthy, maintain their independence, and extend their lives," said Simpson. "American consumers pay significantly more for the same prescription drugs, on average. For example, brand-name drug prices are 70 percent higher in the United States than they are in Canada."

H.R. 380 would allow Americans to benefit from prices in other countries, which are 35-55 percent lower than in the U.S., while still enabling consumers to receive medications at their local pharmacy.

It would also allow individual consumers to purchase prescription drugs for their own personal use from safe, reliable, FDA-inspected Canadian pharmacies. The bill has the added benefit of improving safety provisions for Americans purchasing their drugs from other countries.

"The goal of the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act of 2007 is

to allow the free market to work and allow Americans access to drugs at whatever price pharmaceutical companies are willing to sell their products," said Simpson.



"Pharmaceutical research and development is definitely important and necessary; however, it should not be funded solely by Americans while subsidizing drugs for consumers in Europe and Canada."

Washington, DC

1339 Longworth
Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: 202-225-5531
Fax: 202-225-8216

Boise Office

802 West Bannock, 600
Boise, ID 83702
Phone: 208-334-1953
Fax: 208-334-9533

Idaho Falls Office

490 Memorial Drive, 103
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
Phone: 208-523-6701
Fax: 208-523-2384

Twin Falls Office

1341 Filmore, #202
Twin Falls, ID 83301
Phone: 208-734-7219
Fax: 208-734-7244

Pocatello Office

275 S. 5th Ave., #275
Pocatello, ID 83201
Phone: 208-233-2222
Fax: 208-233-2095

New Enrollment Period for Medicare Advantage Plans

The Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006 allows people with the Original Medicare Plan to join a Medicare Advantage Plan that doesn't include Medicare prescription drug coverage outside of the normal MA enrollment periods at any time in 2007 or 2008. Thus, this opportunity is in addition to the existing enrollment periods listed below:

- The Annual Enrollment Period from November 15 – December 31
- The Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period from January 1 – March 31
- Any Special Election Periods
- The Initial Enrollment Period for individuals new to Medicare

People with Medicare who have a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan can stay in their drug plan if they join a Private Fee-for-Service Plan that doesn't offer Medicare prescription drug coverage. However, if they join a Medicare Advantage Plan (such as an HMO, PPO, or Regional PPO) that doesn't offer Medicare prescription drug coverage, their enrollment in the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan will be automatically cancelled. This means they won't have Medicare prescription drug coverage and could face a late enrollment penalty should they later choose to re-enroll in a drug plan. Before this happens, the person with Medicare will be contacted by their new plan to confirm that the person wants to make this choice, and understands the consequences.

This new open enrollment period doesn't apply for people who want to join a Medicare Medical Savings Account (MSA) Plan, Medicare Advantage Plan that offers Medicare prescription drug coverage, or a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.

The following is a Speech that Congressman Mike Simpson gave at the Ada County Lincoln Day Event to recognize Our Veterans



"It is my honor to recognize a special group of people this evening.

These are ordinary people:
They come from the factories of

Detroit and the cornfields of Iowa. They come from the docks and rigs of the Gulf Coast, the beaches of the West Coast, and they come from the Mountains and Valleys and Farms and Ranches of Idaho.

They are black, they are white, they are Hispanic. They come from the Far East and from the Mideast and they are Native Americans.

They are Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, Mormon, and Muslim.

They are Mothers and Fathers. Husbands and Wives. Sons and Daughters.

In spite of all their differences – a stronger bond unites them – They are Americans and they are American Veterans.

They answered our Nations call in the defense of Liberty.

At Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, and Valley Forge, they fought for the Truths that we hold Self Evident.

At Vicksburg, Antietam, and Gettysburg, they fought for the Government of the People, by the People, and for the People.

In Europe and the Pacific they fought Fascism and Nazism.

In Korea and Southeast Asia they fought Communism.

And today, half way around the world, they fight Radical Fanaticism.

And throughout (to quote Winston Churchill) they Never, Never, Never Quit.

It's because of their sacrifices that you and I can live in the Penthouse of Freedom.

And because of their sacrifices – we must Never, Never, Never Quit on them."

- Congressman Mike Simpson

Health Tips

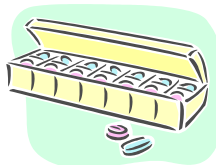
Unless you are a fan of treadmills, the winter can really slow you down when it comes to getting in a fun cardio workout.



When it is too cold to head outside, try one of your area malls for a change of scenery. Mall-walking programs are growing in popularity and offer social perks as well as health benefits. Occasionally, malls organize clubs and various programs or presentations. Contact Customer Service at your local mall to find out if it has any such programs. Just make sure to leave your credit cards at home—or it could become one expensive workout!

Not sure how long or how fast you should be walking? A good aerobic workout is at least 30 minutes of daily exercise, according to [Prevention](#) magazine. And to determine the best level of exertion for your heart health, the magazine suggests the “walk and talk” test: you are walking fast enough that you can hear your breathing, but can still comfortably hold a conversation.

Did you know vitamins have a shelf life? I noticed the other day that there’s an expiration date on the bottle of the calcium pills I take—but does it matter?



According to the Mayo Clinic, these over-the-counter supplements can lose their potency, especially in hot and humid climates. The clinic recommends that you throw away any vitamins past their expiration date and don’t buy products without one. For more tips on how to use vitamin and mineral supplements wisely, visit the [Mayo Clinic](#) online.

Visit the [Cleveland Clinic](#) online for an interesting article, “Should Everyone Over Age 75 Take a Multivitamin?”

12 Tips to Protect Yourself from Healthcare Fraud

From the National Consumer Protection Technical Resource Center

1. Only visit your personal doctor, hospital or clinic for medical help. Only they should make referrals for special equipment, services or medicine.
2. Never show anyone your medical or prescription records without first talking to your doctor or pharmacist.
3. If someone calls and tries to threaten or pressure you into something—simply hang up the phone.
4. If someone comes to your door and says they are from Medicare or some other health care company, shut the door.. It’s shrewd to be rude!
5. Do your homework and talk to your health care provider before buying or investing in internet “cure-all” or “miracle” products or services.
6. Don’t keep mail in your mailbox for more than one day. People steal personal information right out of your mailbox.
7. Rip up or shred your Medicare or other health care papers and other important documents before throwing them away. Crooks go through the trash!
8. Treat your Medicare and Social Security numbers like credit cards. If someone offers to buy your Medicare or Social Security number, don’t do it...it’s simply not worth it.
9. Remember that “Medicare” doesn’t sell anything.
10. Follow your instincts—if it seems too good to be true, it usually is!
11. If you suspect an error, fraud or abuse related to health care, gather the facts and report it.
12. ALWAYS read your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or health care billing statement. Your Medicare Summary Notice is the piece of mail stamped “This is Not a Bill” that comes in after you get your medical care.

Look for three things on your billing statement:

- Charges for services you didn’t get
- Billing for the same thing twice
- Services that were not ordered by the doctor

Do you know someone who would like to receive the Senior Newsletter?

**E-mail Fran Symms at
fran.symms@mail.house.gov
or call 208-334-1953**
